

## Northern Records of Some Stratiomyid Flies

By A. BRINDLE\*

Many flies of the family Stratiomyidae are of striking appearance but are often rare, or at least local, from collecting experience. Their apparent rarity, however, as in other orders, is partly due to the rarity of collectors, especially in Northern England, and they are in reality much more widely distributed. The distribution of most species in Oldroyd (1969) is excellent and the status of each species is well expressed, but additional records made over the past years have considerably increased the known distribution of a number of species of *Oxycera* and a few species of other genera. In the present paper the distribution of the species as listed in Oldroyd (1969) is given first, followed by the records and notes. The records are from specimens in the Manchester Museum, except those shown by an asterisk, which are from the records of the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union: the vice-counties are given and the 10 kilometre square reference of each record is included where known. Only the more recent records are included.

*Oxycera pardalina* Mg. Rare. Southern and western England: Derby.

VC 58: Stockport, Cheshire, June, 1959, W. D. Hincks  
(SJ(33)/88).

VC 59: Whalley, Lancs., 7.8.1975, A. Brindle  
(SD(34)/73).

VC 59: Clitherhoe, Lancs., 27.6.1964, A. Brindle  
(SD(34)/74).

VC 60: Higher Hodder Bridge, Lancs, 3.8.1975, A. Brindle  
(SD(34)/64).

VC 60: Stonyhurst, Lancs., 18.6.1968 (reared), A. Brindle  
(SD(34)/63).

VC 64: Whitewell (now Lancs.), 27.6.1964, A. Brindle  
(SD(34)/64).

\* VC 64: Austwick, Yorks, 16.7.1921, C. A. Cheetham

\* VC 65: Bishopdale, Yorks., 6.8.1932, C. A. Cheetham

\* VC 65: Mickley, Yorks., 5.8.1936, C. A. Cheetham

Occurs widely in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Although often taken singly, it occurs frequently along the river Hodder from Whitewell southwards: the larvae occur in hygropetricous habitats, on wet algae-covered rocks or in mosses in such habitats. 18 larvae were taken from a wet rock near Stonyhurst on 1.5.1968, many adults being reared, whilst eight adults were swept from moss and vegetation hanging from a high bank by the Hodder on 3.8.1975. The species is very likely to occur along other stretches of this and other rivers where limestone and trickling water occur, such as along the river Wharfe in Yorkshire and elsewhere. The records made by the late C. A. Cheetham are included although the specimens have not been checked, since there seems little doubt that these are correct. In my experience, *pardalina* is the most frequently encountered species of *Oxycera*, although *formosa* is also often taken.

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Neither can be regarded as common and both are more frequently taken as larvae.

*Oxycera pygmaea* Fallen. Locally common. Southern England, Scotland, Ireland.

VC 64: Malham Tarn, Yorks., 20.8.1955, 27.7.1956, A. Brindle (SD(34)/86).

This has also been recorded by C. A. Cheetham from VC 63 and other localities in VC 64, including other records from Malham Tarn by H. M. Russell. "Southern" in the distribution should therefore be deleted.

*Oxycera formosa* Mg. Numerous but very local: Southern England to Norfolk, Wales.

VC 59: Whalley, Lancs., 8.7.1957, 7.8.1975, A. Brindle (SD(34)/73).

VC 64: Whitewell (now Lancs.), 23.7.1958, A. Brindle (SD(34)/64).

This species occurs regularly in localities around Whalley and Whitewell, where the larvae occur in mosses in limestone rivulets or in hygropetricous habitats along with *pardalina*. Like this latter species *formosa* is likely to be widely distributed in Lancashire and Yorkshire where suitable habitats occur.

*Oxycera dives* Loew. Very rare. Scotland.

VC 62: Hole of Horcum, Yorks., 26.7.1937, H. Britten (SE(44)/89).

VC 64: Whitewell (now Lancs.), 6.7.1954, A. Brindle (SD(34)/64).

VC 64: Hubberholme, Yorks., 12.7.1975, Dr. Pickup (SD(34)/97).

Another record from the Hole of Horcum by Britten is in the records of the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union, together with other records by Cheetham. This species seems likely to be a local species extending from Northern England into Scotland.

*Oxycera pulchella* Mg. Scattered distribution in southern England and Wales.

VC 40: Oswestry, Shropshire, 18.7.1932, C. H. W. Pugh

\* VC 62: Robin Hoods Bay, Yorks., J. M. Brown (NZ(45)/90).

\* VC 63: Barnsley, Yorks., 14.7.1951, E.G.B. (SE(44)/30).

\* VC 63: Low Eilers, Yorks., August, 1973, P. Skidmore

VC 63: Hooten Pagnall, Yorks, 28.6.1975, J. H. Flint, A. Brindle (SE(44)/40).

VC 64: Thieves Moss, Yorks., 13.5.1961 (larva), A. Brindle (SD(34)/77).

Widely distributed in Yorkshire at least, but not common. Two specimens were taken at Hooten Pagnall, and there are two specimens from Oswestry. The record from Thieves Moss is of a larva which was reared but the adult has been misplaced. Thieves Moss is a fairly small marshy area, approached through a natural "stile" in limestone at the end of Crummockdale, near Austwick, the name referring to its alleged reputation

as the site of former Yorkshire sheep-rustlers. It is also the locality to which the late C. A. Cheetham took D. Bryce and myself years ago in search of *Tipula vafra* Riedel (now *limbata* Zett.), which was one of the many rarities Cheetham recorded from the Austwick area. He recorded *Oxycera nigripes* Verrall from Thieves Moss and a check on the specimen would be useful.

*Stratiomys potamida* Mg. Infrequent in marshy areas of southern England as far north as Warwickshire, Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire.

VC 40: Oswestry, Shropshire, 7.7.1929, C. H. W. Pugh

VC 58: Dunham Massey, Cheshire, June, 1967, H. L. Burrows

VC 59: Pendle Hill End Bridge, Lancs., 13.2.1953 and various dates to 9.3.1959 (larvae), A. Brindle (SD(34)/84).

VC 59: Whalley, Lancs., 26.7.1970, 17.5.1971 (larvae), A. Brindle (SD(34)/73).

VC 60: Hawes Water, Lancs., 4.7.1965, 27.7.1969, A. Brindle (SD(34)/47).

VC 62: Robin Hoods Bay, Yorks., J. M. Brown

VC 63: Shireoaks, Yorks., 7.6.1947, C. A. Cheetham

The distribution should be extended northwards to and including Lancashire and Yorkshire. The adults are not often seen, but the larvae occurred regularly in a small marsh (map reference SD(34)/811427) on grassy moorland, near to the south-east of Pendle Hill in North-east Lancashire. Although the site was unusual, being at an altitude of 1,000 ft., the marsh was alkaline and near a stream. The larvae were first found when searching for *Tipula* larvae, and sporadic sampling over the years showed that the larvae were present in all months. In 1957 an attempt was made to estimate the growth rate and samples were taken on eight occasions, the highest number of larvae found on any one occasion being 24. All were carefully returned to the marsh, as further study on the colony was intended. However, a few years later, during August, there was a cloudburst on Pendle, and although the main flood water came down the valley to the west, causing flooding in a small town eight miles distant, sufficient water came down the south-eastern stream to wash out the marsh and leave a pile of rubble. This has now been eroded and the marsh has returned to a more normal appearance but so far *Stratiomys* has not yet been found again.

The larvae at Whalley were found in alkaline mud near a farm pond (map reference SD(34)/737364), and were again turned up when searching for other larvae. In 1974, however, the farmer destroyed the pond by tipping so that this locality also seems to have gone.

In spite of this the species must exist in the area in other localities and it is hoped to locate more sites.

*Chorisops tibialis* Mg. England and Wales from Yorkshire south.

- VC 59: Freshfield, Lancs., 25.6.1962, A. Brindle  
(SD(34)/20).  
 VC 60: Hawes Water, Lancs., 14.8.1975, A. Brindle  
(SD(34)/47).  
 \* VC 60: Storrs Moss, Lancs., 11.8.1957, P. Skidmore  
(SD(34)/47).  
 VC 69: Witherslack, Cumbria, 19.7.1959, A. Brindle  
(SD(34)/48).  
 VC 69: Coniston, Cumbria, 18.8.1957, A. Brindle  
(SD(34)/39).

Add Cumbria and Lancashire to the distribution.

*Pachygaster minutissima* Zett. Very rare in British Isles, though recorded from Somerset and again from Inverness-shire and Wiltshire.

- VC 59: Freshfield, Lancs., larvae very common under  
pine bark, 2.6.1959, A. Brindle SD(34)/20.

This locality was near the end of Victoria Road, amongst the older pine trees, inland from the Pine Tree Cafe. This cafe formed the base of operations for one of the weeks of the Freshfield Insect Survey in which the larvae of *Pachygaster* were found, and was a well known place for visiting entomologists. The meals tended to be accompanied by a steady rain of sawdust from the rafters, accompanied by the occasional *Anobium*, and the cafe had to be shored up by timbers and other barriers against the steady encroachment of the sea. Attempts to obtain planning permission for a more inland site were baulked by the usual procrastination by the authorities until a winter gale some years ago took the cafe out to sea, where it presumably foundered, *Anobium*-riddled rafters and all. The actual locality is not in the present reserve, but there are sufficient aged pines to provide more *Pachygaster*.

Acknowledgements are due to Mr. P. Skidmore for the records from the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union cards, and to Mr. J. H. Flint whose comments on the published distribution of *Oxycera* prompted the present paper.

#### REFERENCE

- Oldroyd, H. (1969). *Handbk. Ident. Br. Insects*, 9 (Part 4): 1-132.

MIRIS STRIATUS (HEM.: MIRIDAE) IN SUFFOLK. — A single example of this large and conspicuous bug was swept from a beech tree at Shrubland Park, Barham, near Ipswich, Suffolk, on 13th June, 1970 (TM 118533).

Southwood and Leston (1959, *Land and Water Bugs Brit. Isles*: 287) record *M. striatus* as extremely local in the south of England. Although the species has previously been recorded for Suffolk, there appear to be few records. Mr. A. A. Allen (*in litt.*) informs me that he has only taken two examples of this species and that it is certainly usually rare—at least as an adult.

I thank Lord de Saumarez for kindly allowing me to study on his estate at Barham. — DAVID RIDLEY NASH, 266 Colchester Road, Lawford, near Manningtree, Essex, CO11 2BU.